

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 13, 14, and 19-22 without prejudice to or disclaimer of their subject matter. Please AMEND claims 3-6, 9-12, and 15-18, as follows.

1-2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) A scanning exposure apparatus comprising:
an illumination optical system for illuminating a pattern on a mask using
arc-shaped illumination light;
a projection optical system for projecting the pattern on the mask illuminated by
said illumination optical system onto a plate;
a mask stage for scanning the mask;
a plate stage for scanning the plate, said scanning exposure apparatus scanning
said mask stage and plate stage synchronously relative to said projection optical system;
a mask support mechanism for supporting a periphery of the mask; and
a mask stage tilt mechanism for arranging the pattern in an area illuminated by the
arc-shaped illumination light in an object-surface-side focal plane of said projection optical
system, wherein the mask deforms due to its own weight from the peripheral support, according
to claim 1,
wherein said mask support mechanism supports the mask only at two sides parallel to a scan direction.

4. (Currently Amended) A scanning exposure apparatus according to
~~claim 1, claim 3~~, wherein said stage tilt mechanism tilts the mask relative to the scan direction by
tilting a stage stool mounted with the mask.

5. (Currently Amended) A scanning exposure apparatus according to
~~claim 1, claim 3~~, further comprising a projection magnification correction mechanism for
correcting a projection magnification in a direction orthogonal to a scan direction.

6. (Currently Amended) A scanning exposure apparatus according to
~~claim 1, claim 3~~, further comprising a stage control mechanism for synchronizing said mask
stage and plate stage at a speed ratio corresponding to a projection magnification of said
projection optical system, and for scanning relative to said projection optical system, wherein
said stage control mechanism adjusts the speed ratio according to tilts of the mask and plate.

7-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) A scanning exposure apparatus comprising:
an illumination optical system for illuminating a pattern on a mask using
arc-shaped illumination light;
a projection optical system for projecting the pattern on the mask illuminated by
said illumination optical system onto a plate;

a mask stage for scanning the mask;
a plate stage for scanning the plate, said scanning exposure apparatus scanning
said mask stage and plate stage synchronously relative to said projection optical system;
a mask support mechanism for supporting a periphery of the mask; and
a plate stage tilt mechanism for arranging a surface of the plate in an
object-surface-side focal plane of said projection optical system, which plane images the pattern
in an area illuminated by the arc-shaped illumination light, wherein the mask deforms due to its
own weight from the peripheral support, according to claim 7,
wherein said mask support mechanism supports the mask only at two sides
parallel to a scan direction.

10. (Currently Amended) A scanning exposure apparatus according to
claim 9, claim 7, wherein said mask stage tilt mechanism tilts the mask relative to the scan
direction by tilting a stage stool mounted with the mask.

11. (Currently Amended) A scanning exposure apparatus according to
claim 9, claim 7, further comprising a projection magnification correction mechanism for
correcting a projection magnification in a direction orthogonal to a scan direction.

12. (Currently Amended) A scanning exposure apparatus according to
claim 9, claim 7, further comprising a stage control mechanism for synchronizing said mask

stage and plate stage at a speed ratio corresponding to a projection magnification of said projection optical system, and for scanning relative to said projection optical system, wherein said stage control mechanism adjusts the speed ratio according to tilts of the mask and plate.

13-14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) A scanning exposure apparatus comprising:
an illumination optical system for illuminating a pattern on a mask using
arc-shaped illumination light;
a projection optical system for projecting the pattern on the mask illuminated by
said illumination optical system onto a plate;
a mask stage for scanning the mask;
a plate stage for scanning the plate, said scanning exposure apparatus scanning
said mask stage and plate stage synchronously relative to said projection optical system;
a mask support mechanism for supporting a periphery of the mask; and
a mechanism for tilting the mask stage and the plate stage for arranging a surface
of the plate in an object-surface-side focal plane of said projection optical system, which plane
images the pattern in an area illuminated by the arc-shaped illumination light, wherein the mask
deforms due to its own weight from the peripheral support, according to claim 13,
wherein said mask support mechanism supports the mask only at two sides parallel to a scan direction.

16. (Currently Amended) A scanning exposure apparatus according to claim 15, claim 13, wherein said mask stage tilt mechanism tilts the mask relative to the scan direction by tilting a stage stool mounted with the mask.

17. (Currently Amended) A scanning exposure apparatus according to claim 15, claim 13, further comprising a projection magnification correction mechanism for correcting a projection magnification in a direction orthogonal to a scan direction.

18. (Currently Amended) A scanning exposure apparatus according to claim 15, claim 13, further comprising a stage control mechanism for synchronizing said mask stage and plate stage at a speed ratio corresponding to a projection magnification of said projection optical system, and for scanning relative to said projection optical system, wherein said stage control mechanism adjusts the speed ratio according to tilts of the mask and plate.

19-22. (Cancelled)